

The following are preliminary recommendations to the Route 50 Task Force. These recommendations have been provided by Segment 2 volunteers working in conjunction with staff and Economic Development Commission members.

### A. Gateways and Views

Well-defined gateways are inviting, provide a sense of arrival, and provide a visual clue to signify the transition from one place to another. Through architectural and site design, gateways inform those entering that they have arrived at a special place.

Gateways should provide a focal feature and serve to announce that this is a special, unique place that offers a change from the standard or ordinary. The character of the area should be enhanced. These focal features can take the form of landmark buildings, public art, or scenery. Gateways take advantage of views and vistas that enhance and complement through architecture. Typically views are taken for granted and only thought of when they disappear.

### B. Corridor Theme

The Route 50 corridor should provide a sense of arrival from Fairfax County to Loudoun County. As a gateway, the Route 50 corridor should provide a visual transition from the upscale, Colonial styled, planned suburban developments of eastern Loudoun to the beautiful horse country farms, civil war trails, and historic sites of western Loudoun. The Route 50 corridor theme is not a defined standard, but rather a “look” which includes open space, board fencing, stone and brick. Route 50 has the potential to be a beautiful aesthetic corridor that uses a variety of material to emphasize the vistas and create a transition from suburban to rural surroundings.

### C. Architectural Theme

General design criteria or a common theme should be established to enhance the overall appearance and provide some consistency of style throughout the corridor

### D. Streetscape Elements—Sidewalks, street trees, and lighting

The horizontal and vertical space contained between property lines across a street is referred to as the streetscape and typically in the public right-of-way. Streetscapes include those things that frame the street (parking lots, lawn areas, landscape plantings, buildings or open space). The streetscape establishes the public view along a street or corridor and can determine an area’s visual success or failure.

### E. Signs

Signs are a component of the streetscape and are identified in three categories:

- 1) Business signs: includes building name or business name and should be designed to complement the skyline and should not dominate. Business signs should be dispersed and organized to limit visual clutter. Signs should be designed as an integral component of the building and of a compatible material.
- 2) Regulatory signs: includes vehicular and pedestrian controlled signs.
- 3) Identification/informational signs: includes entryway, neighborhood and directional signs.

Signs on buildings serve as business identification while roadway signs provide information to motorists. Business facades can be made unattractive by sign clutter. Too many signs lead to confusion of message, loss of communication, and increased safety concerns for motorists.

Traffic and roadway signs often compete directly with commercial signs and over time tend to accumulate with no regard given to their visual impact. Coordinated sign efforts contribute to a pleasing appearance of the area.

Due to the speed of Route 50, businesses are encouraged to provide entrance signs that will lead motorists off of the road, and then, directional signs to guide them to businesses. Due to the speed limit on the road, motorists are often past the entrance when the sign is seen.

### F. Interim Design Improvements

Existing businesses can be made more functional and aesthetically pleasing with some simple design improvements. These include, but aren't limited to, improving the streetscape, screening parking and equipment with landscaping, cleaning up sites, improving entrances to businesses, coordinating signs, and renovating façades.

### G. Building Orientation

In as much as maximizing the efficiency of Route 50, as a major thoroughfare is a primary goal, access points to Route 50 will be minimized. Businesses located in the Route 50 corridor are encouraged to create an attractive Route 50 frontage elevation even in the event that such an elevation does not reflect the entrance to the building.

Buildings should be orientated with decorative facades facing roadways. Many businesses have interim access on Route 50 until future collector roads are constructed and direct Route 50 access is eliminated. Businesses are encouraged to design buildings with two fronts or to allow for further screening to block the back from Route 50.

### H. Architectural Review Committee

An advisory, non-legislative Architectural Review Committee should be established to meet with existing and future applicants to discuss the design as related to the Route 50 corridor. This would enable a group of peers to review applications and make recommendations as to design improvements. The ultimate goal is to create a visually pleasing corridor.

## Architectural Guidelines and Themes

All of the standards apply to new businesses and many could be used to enhance existing businesses; however, existing business standards have been highlighted.

Category	Concept	Proposed Standards
Building Walls	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>The principle material of the front and side facades is recommended to be brick, stone, stucco or wood. The following materials are suggested for minor architectural components: split faced block, polished concrete, brick, granite, marble or other stone, ceramic tile, glass, stucco, wood, or metal.</p> <p>Standard concrete masonry block shall not be used for the facades of a building.</p> <p>Existing buildings are encouraged to cover the existing metal and pre-cast concrete material with materials from the list of principal materials listed above</p> <p>The following materials can be used for minor architectural components: split faced block, polished concrete, brick, granite, marble or other stone, ceramic tile, glass, stucco, wood, or metal.</p> <p>Color schemes should avoid excessively bright or unusual colors. Color tones should be muted, complements architectural and landscaping themes, and reflects historic Colonial color combinations.</p> <p>Walls longer than 40 feet should be broken up with minimum 6-foot horizontal offsets or portals.</p> <p>25% of any publicly visible façade shall have openings (windows, doors). Windows should not be mirrored.</p>
Building Orientation	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>Building elevations which have the majority of their surface area parallel to an existing or future public road frontage will have each elevation covered generally with the same materials and architectural style.</p> <p>Decorative accents should be encouraged such as windows and covered entrances, etc.</p> <p>Buildings should plan for two potential road frontages.</p>
Building Roofs	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>Roofs should be sloped with flat roofs to be discouraged.</p> <p>Roofs longer than 40 feet should be broken up with dormers, cupolas, or change in roofline.</p> <p>Materials: Tile, shingles, standing seam, and architectural shingles.</p>

## Architectural Guidelines and Themes

Category	Concept	Proposed Standards
		Any mechanical units or appurtenances placed on the roof tops of buildings will be screened by architectural features compatible with building façade architecture.
Site Walls & Screening	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>No noise walls will be used on Route 50 within Loudoun County.</p> <p>Use setbacks and/or landscaped berms to mitigate noise impacts.</p> <p>Screen trash receptacles, service areas, and mechanical equipment with a fence or wall of similar construction to the principal walls of the structure that the equipment serves; max height as appropriate to the material or area being screened. Suggested orientation should be away from road frontage(s) and screened.</p> <p>It is preferred that no outdoor storage be allowed in the Route 50 corridor.</p> <p>Existing outdoor storage should be screened with walls, berms, landscaping or a combination; max height as appropriate to the material being screened and not visible from road frontage(s).</p>
Parking	Enhance the beauty of the area and encourage safe and efficient traffic flow	<p>Majority of parking should be to the side and back of the building.</p> <p>Distribute parking throughout projects; break up large lots with streets, landscaping, islands</p> <p>A shared parking plan may be used to justify less parking than required by code</p> <p>Parking garages should use the same materials as the main structure</p> <p>Parking garages should be designed to limit height to that of adjacent tree canopy; be built into topography when possible; and use facades to screen view of automobiles and sloped parking decks, placing level parking decks against exterior walls with sloped decks in the center of the structure; surround the parking structure at the ground level with occupied space.</p> <p>Delivery access/loading areas should be to the back of the building and screened.</p> <p>Provide walls or berms or a combination to screen parking- max height 4 ft.</p>
Lighting	Enhance the beauty of the area and encourage	Lighting for commercial/mixed use development should be limited to providing safety and security for users, not for advertisement.

## Architectural Guidelines and Themes

Category	Concept	Proposed Standards
	safe and efficient traffic flow	<p>Some architectural or landscape spotlighting will be permitted to highlight architecture, landscape, and monument/ground location signs.</p> <p>Lighting for commercial/mixed use development should be arranged as to reflect light away from adjacent residential property and streets.</p> <p>Only timed or motion-sensor lighting should be allowed after business hours.</p> <p>Lighting along Route 50 should be context sensitive.</p> <p>Lighting should be 12 to 14 feet in height at pedestrian paths or 18 to 20 foot heights at vehicular roadways.</p> <p>No internally lit signs; no neon, flashing, traveling or intermittent lighting.</p> <p>Light poles should be black, decorative, fluted, fiberglass poles.</p> <p>Light fixtures should look like traditional Colonial lanterns closest to historic areas and can be more interpretive farther away from historic districts.</p>
Utilities	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>All on-site utilities should be located underground unless required by the utility to be otherwise located.</p> <p>Traffic signal poles should be cantilevered, and painted black.</p>
Architectural Theme	Enhance the beauty of the area	<p>Elevations should be symmetrical, follow classical proportions, and be organized into regular bays of a consistent width. Horizontal elements such as water tables, eaves, and ridges should be expressed and align with adjacent structures where possible.</p> <p>The architecture of structures shall be similar (but may be distinct) in design and materials from adjacent structures. Use of similar materials is encouraged in landscape elements such as retaining walls, walkways, fencing, and plazas or other public spaces.</p> <p>Any side or rear building elevations which have the majority of their surface area parallel to, or approximately parallel to, an existing and/or future public road frontage should have each such elevation covered generally with the same materials and architectural style as those used for the front elevation of the building.</p> <p>A covered walkway across the front of each building is desirable</p>

## Architectural Guidelines and Themes

Category	Concept	Proposed Standards
		for pedestrians  No noise walls should be used on Route 50. Use setbacks and/or landscaped berms to mitigate noise impacts.  A main entry feature on each building is recommended

Signs are an important component of the corridor, and it is suggested that a committee be established to create standards for this important category. It is critical that businesses have visibility without creating visual clutter.

Paths, walkways and trails are important and need to be addressed but were beyond the scope of this group.